



THE MAINE SENATE
132nd Legislature

Testimony of Senator Stacey Guerin
In support of LD 1934
An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting
May 12, 2025

Good Morning, Senator Baldacci, Representative Salisbury, and colleagues on the Joint Standing Committee on State and Local Government, I am Senator Stacy Guerin. I represent Senate District 4, which includes all of Piscataquis County and 11 towns in Penobscot County. I am proud to cosponsor LD 1934 An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting.

Several years ago, I skied cross-county through Baxter State Park on a multi-night adventure and marveled at the night sky above me. Each night as the stars shone brilliantly, I thought about how blessed I was to experience the awe-inspiring beauty of God's creation. The scripture from Psalm 19:1 reminded me that "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork". I wished both that more people could experience what I did, and that I could enjoy such spectacular night skies closer to home.

Earlier this session, I brought before you a bill to increase public awareness of the importance of the night sky, especially to migrating birds, by designating the second week of May as Dark Sky Week. Thank you for your support and for expanding that idea to include the second week of September. I am excited to promote astrotourism, an activity in which interest is growing. Last year's solar eclipse showed us that people are willing to travel to enjoy celestial events, and it sparked even more interest.

Fortunately, Maine is home to some of the darkest, most beautiful night skies in the eastern US. Let's keep it that way, and let's make sure it's possible to see the stars wherever you are, not just in remote places like Baxter. LD 1934 An Act to Promote Responsible Outdoor Lighting is meant to do just that.

This bill will reduce light pollution and the wasted electricity that powers it by requiring that beginning next year, new public facilities—state, municipal, or those funded with public grants--use responsible lighting. Shielded fixtures, light that is a warm color and pointed only where it needs to go, and turning off unnecessary lights after 10:00 p.m. will go a long way toward making sure that everyone can see the night sky.

The bill also directs municipalities to adopt an outdoor lighting ordinance, as the town of Greenville in my district already has done. To help them, the Maine Office of Community Affairs will be charged with developing a model ordinance by next fall.

At least 18 other states have laws addressing light pollution, including Arizona, Arkansas, and New Hampshire. I first became aware of the possibility of this type of legislation when vacationing in Arizona. We have visited both rural and urban areas in Arizona and found it

possible to enjoy the night sky in both. In the cities of Phoenix and Tucson, lighting was carefully situated to allow for the safety and security needed in a big city while still protecting the dark skies of the heavens to be visible. Maine should join them to ensure that we, our children, and future generations will continue to enjoy this spectacular, but increasingly rare, resource.